

The Challenge

Action points and community engagement

Group feedback supplied by Penny Thompson

- Coffee shop on neutral territory
- Connecting prayer with people on neutral territory
- Compassionate café for bereaved
- Teddy Bear club for parents and babies and toddlers
- Drop in health checks
- Coffee and cake invite for those badly affected by pandemic
- The confidence as Christians to give it a go and not be ashamed of being a church group

Group feedback supplied by Nick Atkins

- We're already doing community engagement, bit of frustration by some.
- We need to 'get out there and do it'!
- County larders, food banks and pop-up shops are great but all have different set ups and procedures.
- Bures parish for example are frustrated that faculty processes are being held up at present for the likes of internet provision.
- Need to maintain good standards of YouTube services online as online presence has been successful to engage non church folk.
- Could we have Kiran's video and script if possible so it can be engaged with?

Group feedback supplied by Archdeacon Sally Gaze

1. Action points - to find out what Lightwave and Loverural needs to do to raise awareness and make sure their community engagement initiatives are connected as part of the diocesan community engagement overview.
2. What we are already doing - Loverural, pop-up shops, community café, food bank, babybank, Kintsugi Hope initiative beginning, churchyards project etc

Group feedback supplied by Alan Forsdyke

Kathleen Palmer, Brandon: Thursday - coffee caravan at marketplace - struck by the number of people who've not been out for a while and also been bereaved. Deep conversations and prayer with people. Tuesday - repair and share shop groups of (particularly men) have engaged. Community lunch for 40 people each week.

Brian Rogerson, Capel St Mary - virtual coffee shops held each week on Zoom: began with 6-7 now up to 25-30. Dealing with bereavement: compassionate café in the church - 16 people (weekly I think).

Michale Wilde, St John's Thingoe Deanery: regular food bank support by way of donations. Lots of work helping children to realise the church is there for them. 20 x 10-11 year olds engaged (10 at a time on alternative weeks) from local church school to work on making kneelers. Having great conversations about what they are doing. All very interested and back to school with great enthusiasm. They look forward to it. Room for further development to engage more with faith.

Tony Allwood: The Hub Café meets weekly with a repairing aspect monthly. Very successful. Two ladies bring their sewing machines which are used to make repairs to clothing. Determined not to deprive local businesses so bicycles not repaired. Good selection of glues available for use. Most common repairs are on electrical items that have stopped working. Also have set up "The Little Pantry" - a pretty box/shed where people can take away food whenever they want. Lacks church linkage but is near the church hall entrance.

Group feedback supplied by Charlotte Cook

- Go to the people rather than people coming to you
- Noticing and responding appropriately
- The pandemic as an opportunity to reassess
- Lots of stories of collaboration and multiplication
- Development in communication and keeping people engaged and informed.

Group feedback supplied by Annette Shannon

Action Points

- concerns that people were at capacity in what they are doing
- encouragement to look at how we can deepen experience without adding more

Suggestions:

- offer to pray with people if they share a worry/struggle/. Just a few words in prayer for them. Alternative to ask if they would like to pray for them when you are in church etc.
- stress the need to stop, look and listen as well as doing.
- suggestion that many mental health issues are about loss of spirit.... initiative to explore what church can do to help good mental health
- memorial service in churchyard for those who visit the church yard to tend graves.
- creation of a community flowerbed as part of Messy Church (including planting up wellies)
- café for the widowed.

Group feedback supplied by Anna Hughes

- Congregations arguably have declined over covid.
- Trying to get people through the doors eg for concerts, apple displays, falconry for owls – church has been full for these events
- Has worked – helped congregations, conversations and know who we are. Coffee caravan now coming once a month – new relationships.

- Science themed events coming up half term run by volunteers – building on previous nature dates
- Wish to be semi-intentional, subtly
- Will take back reassurance – ideas always welcome he says!

Group feedback supplied by George Fisher

- The power of prayer is overriding
- Current ways of engaging with the community were explored eg:- food banks, community lunches and coffee mornings.
- Political point - but we have to question "why are foodbanks necessary?"
- Barry Vincent - "face to face community engagement is essential". Barry works in a rural benefice and spends a big proportion of his time walking around his villages meeting people.
- Under pin work started during the pandemic - eg zoom prayer sessions.
- Parish Share was seen by some to be a burden that detracted from community efforts.
- The church should be seen to be relevant to the community.
- The Community Larder in Halesworth is now self-sustaining and bringing in new church members.
- We need to find ways of bridging the gap between town and country.
- Should we abandon some rural churches to reduce financial burdens.
- The above represents the bulk of the group's thinking, but we did go off script at times!

Group feedback supplied by Carol Mansell

Action points.

- To encourage individuals in deepening their personal prayer life and relationship with God.
- Remember that the foundation of what we do is prayer.

Examples of activities that have been happening so far:

- Prayer pebbles in church porches even when church buildings were locked.
- Prayer bench in churchyards where people could be encouraged to sit and pray when church was not open.